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ASTOR LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS



JUNE, 1953 - VOL. 19, No. 10.



WESTMINSTER NEWS

1953

WESTMINSTER WINS 5 AWARDS

AUDIO ENGINEERING AWARD FOR THE BEST SYMPHONIC RECORDING

MAHLER:

SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN C SHARP MINOR
Symphony No. 10 in F Sharp Minor

Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera,
Hermann Scherchen, conductor

WL 207

AUDIO ENGINEERING AWARD FOR THE BEST FOLK MUSIC RECORDING

LOPEZ TEJERA:

JOYS AND SORROWS OF ANDALUCIA

WL 5135

GRAND PRIX DU DISQUE AWARD FOR

PROKOFIEFF:

LT. KIJE SUITE, OP. 60
Scythian Suite, Op. 20

Vienna Symphony Orchestra,
Hermann Scherchen, conductor

WL 5091

DOWNBEAT AWARD FOR BEST VOCAL RECORDING

ITALIAN SONGS

Magda Laszlo, soprano

WL 5119

DOWNBEAT AWARD FOR BEST PIANO RECORDING

SCHUBERT:

FOUR IMPROMPTUS, Op. 90
FOUR IMPROMPTUS, Op. 120
Sonata in A Major, Op. 120

WL 205

JULY RELEASES

J. S. BACH:

Cantata No. 76 ("Die Himmel Erzählen
Die Ehre Gottes"), Magda Laszlo—So-
prano, Hilde Roessel-Majdan—Contralto,
Petre Munteanu—Tenor, Richard Standen
—Bass, Akademischer, Orchestra of the
Vienna State Opera, Conducted by Her-
mann Scherchen. WL 5201

JOSEF HAYDN:

Trio No. 1 for Violin, Cello and Piano in
G Major; Trio No. 28 for Violin, Cello
and Piano in G Major; Trio No. 30 for
Violin, Cello and Piano in D Major. Jean
Fournier—Violin, Antonio Janigro—Cello,
Badura-Skoda—Piano. WL 5202

SCARLATTI:

Sonatas for Harpsichord, Vol. V.
Fernando Valenti—Harpsichord. WL 5205

SCHUBERT:

String Quartet Series 5 No. 4 in C Major;
String Quartet Series 5 No. 5 in B Flat
Major. Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet.

WL 5210

BEETHOVEN:

String Quartet in D Major Op. 18, No. 3;
String Quartet in C Minor Op. 18, No. 4.
Barylli Quartet. WL 5211

Music by Schubert. Leslie Bridgewater
and Westminster Light Orch. WL 4006

Waltzes for Band. Deutschmeister Ka-
pelle, Conducted by Julius Herrmann.

WL 3005

WATCH FOR THIS WESTMINSTER MASTERPIECE

BACH'S

ST. MATTHEW PASSION

NATURAL BALANCE



The American RECORD GUIDE



JUNE 1953 • Vol. XIX, No. 10

formerly

The American Music Lover

A New Record Company

Editorial Notes

AS MOST OF YOU know by now,

Cetra-Soria Records was transferred to Capitol Records as of April 1st. The first of Capitol's Cetra-Soria releases will be issued in the fall. So the future of Italian opera in authentic performances from the homeland, as we have known them from Cetra of Italy, looms bright for the future. The operatic achievements of Cetra-Soria could hardly have found a better home, or a concern more interested from its president down in furthering Italian Cetra's zealous work and perpetuating its operatic treasures, than Capitol Records. As an old friend of Richard C. Jones, Classical Recording Director of Capitol, and his capable assistant John Coveney, I knew the future of Cetra recordings was in friendly hands, for both Dick and John are operatic enthusiasts.

"We, at Capitol," said Dick Jones to me recently, "are looking forward to the release of the new Cetra recordings in

which will be heard some of the foremost contemporary Italian and European stars. Credit is due to our visionary president, Mr. Glen Wallich, for our acquisition of Cetra-Soria. It was he who handled directly the contract with Signor Trinelli, who is head of Cetra in Turin. At this time Mr. Wallich is in Italy discussing with Signor Trinelli future operatic releases, which are now being recorded for release beginning in the fall.

"Mr. Wallich's interest in Cetra-Soria was motivated by his especial interest in authenticity of performance as well as the exceptional quality for which Cetra is already known. For example, Cetra's use of the full orchestra, which is not true of all other opera recordings, was particularly gratifying to Mr. Wallich. It was a similar interest in authenticity which prompted Capitol to sign an exclusive contract with Ballet Theatre, the first releases of which have proved enormously successful. New recordings

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were made by Ballet Theatre the day before the company left recently on its European tour."

As an old friend and admirer of Dario Soria, the president of Cetra-Soria Records since its inception in 1946, I was loathe to think of his relinquishment of the Italian operatic project, so close to his heart, which under his competent guidance had, both in quality of performance and recording, advanced steadily. Having made a niche for himself in the record world, it was unthinkable that he would not continue in some similar capacity. When I mentioned this to him, his eyes twinkled as he said: "A man does not abandon a fine horse in mid-stream, *amico caro*, unless there is another equally fine one at hand. There is another record project of which I will tell you before long." Rumors at that time were linking him to a large international combine which on April 1st he would neither acknowledge nor deny.

E.M.I. (U.S.) Ltd.

On May 1st, before leaving for Europe, Dario broke the news, which outlined his association with a new American company, Electric and Musical Industries (U.S.) Ltd., of which he is president. A new record label, Angel Records, is to be launched in September. It will be applied to the American issues of European Columbia recordings which until December 31, 1952 were distributable through the American Columbia company. The announcement of the new concern with Mr. Soria as president came from Sir Alexander Aikman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Electric and Musical Industries Ltd. of Hayes, Middlesex, England, and by John N. Macleod, Director of E. M. I.'s international operations. With the launching of its own independent label in this country, E. M. I. plans to develop and expand its Columbia catalogue and to broaden its representation in the American market.

European Columbia offers a far-reaching market, for the countries in which the Columbia Graphophone Company (a subsidiary of E. M. I.) conducts recording activities at the present time

include Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, Holland, and others.

The label, "Angel Records," derives its name from the trademark, which is 55 years old, owned by the English company since 1898 and used for its recordings. It shows a chubby "Recording Angel," a cherub seated on a disc, tracing sound with a stylus. Collectors of old recordings are familiar with this cherub figure. Like the famous dog, listening to "his master's voice," on H. M. V. and RCA Victor records, the "Recording Angel" belongs to the opening days of the phonograph.

Artists' Roster

The first American releases of Angel Records will include the first officially sponsored recordings of Italy's famed opera house La Scala, at Milan. Details of conductors and casts will be announced shortly. Among organizations and artists, who will be represented in the autumn releases of Angel Records, are the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, the French National Orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; conductors—Andre Cluytens, Issay Dobrowen, Alceo Galliera, Herbert von Karajan, Igor Markevitch, Tullio Serafin; pianists—Geza Anda, Aldo Ciccolini, Walter Gieseking, Marguerite Long, and others; singers—sopranos Maria Callas and Elisabeth Schwartzkopf; mezzo-soprano Fedora Barbieri; tenors Nicolai Gedda and Giuseppe di Stefano; baritone Rolando Peneai; bassos Boris Christoff and Nicola Rossilimeni; chamber music groups—the Quartetto Italiano and "I Musicali," an ensemble conducted by Franco Ferrara.

Angel Records will devote a section of its catalogue to "The Spoken Word," Mr. Soria says. Dramatic, literary and poetic works will be included, classic and modern. First to be released will be Oscar Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Earnest* with a cast including John Gielgud, Pamela Brown, Dame Edith Evans and Robert Morley.

Viewed from the editorial armchair, Angel Records looks like another big American record company in the making. Maybe the little "Record Angel" is

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spreading his wings. There should be no limit to the heights he can obtain.

Schlussus Encores

SCHLUSNUS SINGS, VOL. 5: *Venetianisches Gondellied*; *Auf Fluegeln des Gesanges* (Mendelssohn); *O komm' im Traum* (Liszt); *Das Erkennen*; *Der Noeck* (Loewe); *Talismane*; *Die Beiden Grenadiere*; *Romanze* (Schumann); *Ständchen*; *Der Blumenbrief*; *An die Musik* (Schubert); Heinrich Schlussus (baritone) with Franz Rupp, Sebastian Peschko and Otto Braun (piano). Decca LP DL-9624, \$5.85.

▲A WELL arranged recital opening with Mendelssohn's slight *Venetian Gondola Song* and ending with Schubert's enduring *An die Musik*. This program reveals many facets of the Schlussus artistry—his poised singing of *On Wings of Song*, his caressing singing of Liszt's *O komm' im Traum*, his manly renditions of two Loewe ballads. Reversing the disc, we hear memorable performances of Schumann's invocatory *Talismane*, the dramatic *Die Beiden Grenadiere* and the lyrical *Romanze*. There is a lesson in artistic singing in his lyrically poised rendition of Schubert's *Serenade*, his tender singing of *Der Blumenlied* and the quiet dignity of his *An die Musik*. His various accompanists are as closely aligned with the music as with the singer. But it is Franz Rupp, who opens and closes the recital, whose exquisite piano playing helped make all the recordings he made with Schlussus memorable ones. The recording varies in balance with the keyboard instrument, but none are lacking in essential realism. I would not wish any who enjoy fine lieder artistry to miss this disc, any more than I would wish them to neglect the other four records of the singer's art previously issued by Decca, which deserves our unbounded thanks for assembling the five recitals. —P.H.R.

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BEETHOVEN: *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98 Heinrich Schlussus (baritone) with Sebastian Peschko (piano); **BRAHMS:** *Vier ernste Gesänge*, Op. 121; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone) with Hertha Klust (piano). Decca LP DL-9668, \$5.85.

▲THE RECORDINGS of both cycles, derived from Deutsche Grammophon, are excellently engineered with the balance between voice and piano quite realistic. Both of these song recitals are tests of a singer's artistry and it must be said that both baritones are artists of exceptional musical and vocal attainments. Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*, with its wistful longing of a lover, remains his most satisfying contribution to the lieder field. Of the several versions extant on LP, Schlussus' is the most satisfying vocally and expressively. The purity of the noted baritone's style and his enunciation of the text are a joy to the ear, though he lacks the warmth of Huesch in the latter's 78 rpm version. He has the voice and the artistry combined which was not true in Schiøtz's issue reviewed last month.



Doria Soria

President of Angel Records

The *Serious Songs* of Brahms, with their accent on "longing for death," were written the year before the composer's death. They are among his major achievements as a song writer and reveal him as a profound religious thinker. They were inspired by the illness and death of Clara Schumann. Fischer-Dieskau is a gifted interpretative artist, though vocally he has his limitations on the high and low ends of his voice. His is the most moving rendition of these songs on LP. The beauty of his voice and the depth of feeling conveyed are attributes of a great lieder singer. Hertha Klust's accompaniments are full and rich and earnestly expressive. Here is a disc that no admirer of fine lieder artistry should fail to procure.

—J.N.

A Memorial Issue to ADOLF BUSCH

SCHUBERT *Trio No. 2 in E flat, Opus 100*; Rudolf Serkin, Adolf Busch, and Herman Busch; Columbia LP disc ML 4654, \$5.45.

▲ISSUED as a memorial to the late Adolf Busch, this record displays both the greatness and the weaknesses of this unique violinist, who died last summer. Compared with the Badura-Skoda, Fournier, Janigro disc on Westminster, it is harsh in texture, less well-integrated in sound. But it is also a far more masterly and persuasive performance of a great Schubert chamber work.

Busch's greatest virtue was his abiding and deep devotion to music. His was the inspiring spark that made the chamber, music performances—either with Serkin his quartet, or his chamber orchestra—so intensely rewarding to the listener, despite the technical shortcomings of Busch as a violinist. When, on this disc, we hear the soaring lyric line of Schubert, the instinctive gradations of tension and phrase, and the always musical and tasteful moments of emotional outpouring,

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we can forgive Adolf Busch's wiry and sometimes off-pitch tone.

Comparing this new disc with the old Victor record by the same group, I sense a great development in the style of Serkin. Whereas he was earlier a chamber-music player of great clarity and technical resource in the projection of superb musicianship, he is here a virtuoso pianist who can still participate magnificently in an ensemble performance. Only Clifford Curzon, among the concert pianists of our day, is so satisfying an ensemble player.

Compare Serkin with the younger Badura-Skoda, and you can see how much Schubert gains from the bright ringing tone, the grand style, and constant alertness of Serkin. This is no reflection upon the younger man, for he may well be another Serkin in a couple of decades, for no small part of Serkin's greatness here comes from his vast experience, now culminating in a ripe and brilliant maturity.

As a recording, this new disc has not the depth or richness of the Westminster. Acoustically it has an intimate sound, for it was recorded in a private home in Vermont, and this atmosphere is most attractive. Like other Columbia chamber-music and violin records, this requires reduction of treble on some sets. Otherwise it offers excellent fidelity.

—Phil Hart

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

HANDEL: *Giulio Cesare* (Opera in 3 Acts—abridged) (sung in Italian): Paul Sandoz (Cesare), Rolf Sandor (Curio), Maria Helbing (Cornelia), Friedrich Brueckner-Rueggeberg (Sesto), Sylvia Gaehwiller (Cleopatra), Siegfried Tapolet (Ptolemy); Franz Kelch (Achilla), Margarete Witte-Waldbauer (Nireno), Chorus and Orchestra of the Handel Society conducted by Walter Goehr. Handel Society LP set 18, 2 discs, \$11.90.

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THE SAME (Abridged) (sung in Italian): Otto Wiener (Cesare); Phil Curzon (Ptolemy); Herbert Handt (Sesto), Elizabeth Roon (Cleopatra), Mira Kalin (Cornelia), Akadamiechor, Pro Musica Chamber Orchestra, Vienna, conducted by Hans Swarowsky. Vox LP set, PL-8012, \$11.90.

▲GIULIO CESARE was one of Handel's most successful operas. It saved the day for Italian opera in London after Ariosti's *Vespasiano* was so badly received that it threatened the very existence of opera in England. This was in 1724. *Giulio Cesare* was an instant success and remained a source of remuneration for many years for its composer. It was the last of his operas to keep the stage, being revived in 1787 for the sake of King George III, who was especially fond of Handel's music. Listening to these two recordings of not more than half of the original score, one finds reasons to rejoice that at least a goodly part of the opera was recorded, at the same time that one regrets the mutilation of a great score in both cases. For the abridgement of the score fails to clarify the story and leaves out many fine scenes and arias. In the case of the Handel Society issue, an attempt to maintain some narrative sequence has been made. Here, the use of recitatives helps one grasp the significance of dramatic intent. In the case of the Vox issue, the recitatives are almost negligible, resulting in the inclusion of more arias and ensembles. But these latter without the recitatives seem unrelated with the constant shifting of keys, becoming a sort of patch-work sequence. Walter Goehr in the Handel Society set has obviously gone back to Chrysander of the Handel *Gassellschaft*; what the Vox recording director did is a moot question.

Neither performance is vocally satisfactory throughout. The Caesar and Cleopatra of Handel Society issue are fine artists. Paul Sandoz, the Swiss baritone, is a noted lieder artist and some of his recordings have received just praise in our pages. Sylvia Gaehtwiller has a lovely voice and she sings expressively.

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Her counterpart in the Vox set, Elisabeth Roon, has a pleasing coloratura voice for which Vox includes the florid aria *Da tempeste il legno infranto* in Act III, omitted in the Handel Society set. Miss Roon lacks the expressive beauty of Miss Gaehtwiller's voice. Otto Wiener is a highly competent Caesar but his voice is throaty in production and not so richly smooth as Sandoz's. In the Handel set, the balance of the singers do not rise above competence and at least one—Tappolet as Ptolemy, is unsatisfactory with his wabbly bass. Vox's Phil Curzon is the better Ptolemy, doing full justice to his aria, *L'empio, sleal, indegno*, at the end of Scene 3 in Act I. It is Sandoz and Gaehtwiller who make the final act memorable with the latter's touchingly sung *Piangero, piangero la sorte*, preceded by the important recitative omitted by Roon. Sandoz's aria, *Aure, deh, per pietà*, with its wonderful recitative, is nobly sung, and far more moving than Wiener's. Vox's Sextus, Herbert Handt, is more artistic than is the Sextus of Brueckner-Rueggeberg.

The orchestral playing under Goehr's capable direction is more expressive. Swarowsky tends to be vigorous without any personal feeling. Reproductively, both sets are on a par, well balanced and realistic in sound though not representative of true high fidelity recording, which would be—in my estimation—out of place in Handel.

To sum up, those who like some sort of correlation in opera will want the Handel Society set, while those who like highlights of opera and do not mind the abrupt break-off of one aria and the sudden start of another will probably favor the Vox set. It seems to me that a great deal of the nobility of Handel's music lies in his dramatic recitatives and because of this I lean toward the Handel Society release.

—J.N.

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The American Record Guide
Ready in June
Price 50c

LP Record Characteristics

by George F. Varkonyi

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS there have been many articles written on record compensation and turnover frequencies. Most of this information has been substantially correct. However, through misinterpretation by pseudo experts and not too well informed audio hobbyists, there is a growing number of misconceptions which require clarification.

The necessity for record compensation is now an accepted fact but the layman has only a muddled understanding of this essential phase of record reproduction. Both the owner and the prospective buyer of sound equipment is barraged with graphs, charts, and specifications which he is unable to interpret. Yet to be an intelligent user of high quality equipment a certain amount of technical knowledge is a necessity.

The Need For Compensation

The term "Flat response" is perhaps the best understood term in Audio. It means that all sounds in a system within specified limits are amplified an equal amount, or that the relative amplitudes of sounds within these limits are unchanged. Thus an amplifier rated flat from 30 to 15,000 cycles per second will amplify equally all sounds within these boundaries. (For clarity the term sound is used, although in a strict sense only electrical impulses are amplified in an amplifier.)

In assembling an audio system one of the requisites is to have a flat overall characteristic.* Obviously, if all the components in the chain are flat, we have a system with "Flat" response. Unfortunately this will not reproduce a recording properly, because it is impossible for technical reasons to record sound on

discs with a flat frequency characteristic. As with all audio reproduction, the problem is the reproduction of the frequencies at either end of the spectrum. In recording, bass frequencies must be curtailed to prevent distortion and overcutting. At the other end, the highs must be boosted to raise the recorded sound level over the inherent noise level of the recording. Detailed explanation of this has been covered by a number of thorough articles on the subject** hence we need not delve into this phase further. These deviations from flat response necessitate the use of compensation to reproduce recordings properly. These compensators or equalizers are electric networks with the exact converse characteristics of those used in the recording process. A recording reproduced through its proper network will have the desired "flat" response.

Record Characteristics

The amount of bass reduction and treble boost unfortunately is arbitrary, and there are almost as many response characteristics as there are major record

**Other important requirements are low harmonic and intermodulation distortion and good transient response. These, however, are not related to our discussion.*

****See On Record Compensation** (November 1951). *Other important articles of interest to the record enthusiast—Stokowski Talks on Music and its Reproduction, with special emphasis on range (January & February, 1953), and Needle Points in Relation to Modern Grooves. The last two are available in reprints at 10c each.*

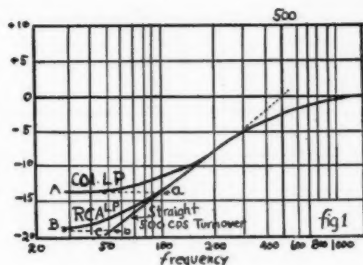
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companies. In 1950, the Audio Engineering Society appointed a committee to recommend a standard reproducing curve. Some of the foremost Audio engineers of our time arrived at what is now known as the AES curve. The hope, however, that some sort of standardization would be achieved was shortlived. Although a number of record companies accepted the new curve, only recently a major company came out with a "new system." This new curve is very close to the AES but not quite the same.

The term "turnover frequency" has long been used to describe specific record characteristics. The turnover frequency is the *theoretic* point at which the record characteristic curve begins to diverge from flat response. There is both a high frequency and low frequency turnover in most recordings. Since the advent of the many new LP curves, this form of notation is no longer adequate or accurate. The slope of the curve or the rate of base accentuation or treble boost must also be specified. This is usually in terms of so many d.b. per octave. The common rate of change is 6 d.b. per octave, which means that for each octave below the turnover point the response is decreased by one half. In the case of the treble boost of 6 d.b. per octave, the response doubles every octave past the specified turnover. In addition not all curves continue to change at the specified rate to the end of the frequency spectrum. Both RCA Victor New Orthophonic and Columbia LP use a 500 c.p.s. turnover and decrease at the rate of 6 d.b. per octave. However, both have a second turnover frequency. Columbia returns to a flat characteristic below 50 c.p.s., while RCA Victor does this at 100 c.p.s.

The fallacy of describing either of these curves as having 500 c.p.s. bass turnover is obvious. Figure 1 shows these two modified 500 cycle turnover curves plotted next to a straight 500 cycle curve.

A different situation exists at the high end. For example, both the London 78 rpm and LP have the same 3,000 c.p.s. high frequency turnover point. In this case the rate of change or slope of both curves remains constant to the



(Fig. 1)

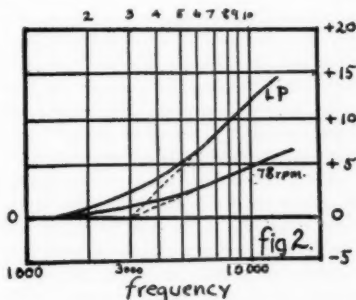
Three curves all using 500 c.p.s. bass turnover. Curves A and B each have a second turnover at points A and B respectively and continuing along the dotted lines shown. Curve C is the modified 500 c.p.s. turnover.

end of the audio spectrum. However, the 78 rpm curve rises at the rate of 3 d.b. per octave whereas the LP rises at the usual 6 d.b. per octave. (See Figure 2).

Figure 3 shows the five major curves used in LP reproduction today. Unfortunately, some manufacturers use other than these various combinations of curves. It is to be hoped that all record companies will adopt, as some have recently done, the practice of specifying on each record the playback characteristic to be used.

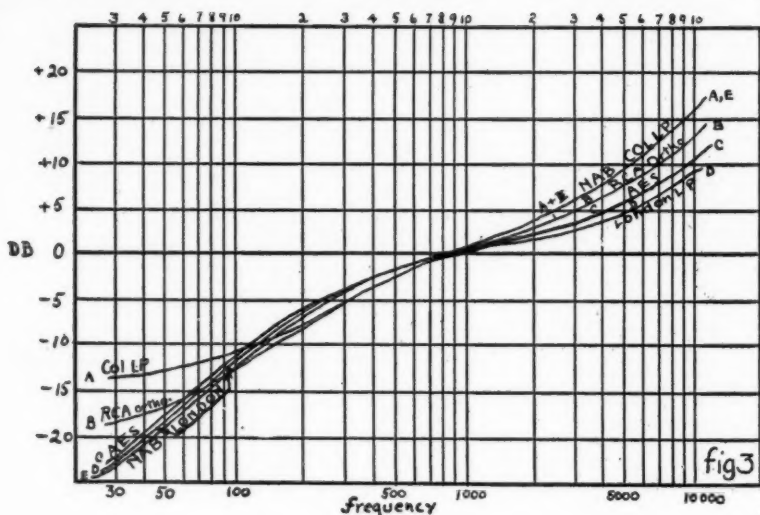
Interpretation of Curves

The higher the bass turnover frequency the more bass boost is required for com-



(Fig. 2)

London 78 and LP high frequency curves. Both with 3,000 c.p.s. turnover.



(Fig. 3)

Major LP Characteristic Curves

	Bass Turnover	Treble Turnover
A. Columbia LP	500 modified at 100 c.p.s.	1,590
B. RCA New Orthophonic	500 modified at 50 c.p.s.	2,000
C. AES	400	2,500
D. London	450	3,000
E. NAB	500	1,590

pensation. The higher the treble turnover frequency the less de-emphasis is required. The tendency in modern recording is toward higher treble turnover to reduce distortion. A low treble turnover boosts highs to a point where in full range recordings overcutting and resultant tracking distortion results. On bass turnovers 500 cycles seems to be the design center. The high bass boost required by higher turnovers emphasizes hum and turntable rumble. This is the reason that the Columbia LP curve and the RCA New Orthophonic curve do not continue at a uniform 6 d.b. per octave rate to the end of the bass range. They level off and thus require less boost at the hum and turntable rumble frequencies hence lowering the noise level.

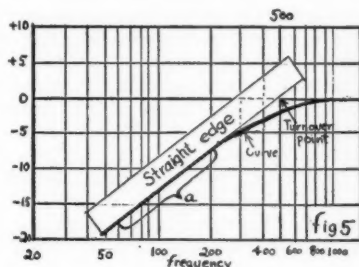
The solid line in Figure 4 shows the familiar AES curve. To the uninitiated it would appear that both the bass and treble turnover are at 1,000 cycles as it is at this point that the curve leaves the 0 d.b. line. This is a common error. The term "turnover frequency" refers to the point at which the 6 d.b. per octave slope would intersect the reference line if it were possible or desirable to have such a sharp change in the slope line. The dotted lines in Figure 4 show the 6 d.b. per octave slope and intersect the reference line at points B and C, which are the correct points for the AES curve. Such a sharp curve is never used in recording. It is however the skeleton around which the practical curve, shown by the solid line, is built.

In the case of modified curves it is difficult for the layman to determine the turnover frequency from a graph. With straightforward curves it is much easier. The first thing to do is to determine the straight portion of the 6 d.b. curve. In this case, it is in Section A of Figure 5. Place a straight edge along this line and allow it to project across 0 d.b. reference. The point where the straight edge intersects the reference line is the crossover frequency. The same method may be used for all curves where a constant slope is employed. See Figures 1, 2 and 4.

Practical Usage

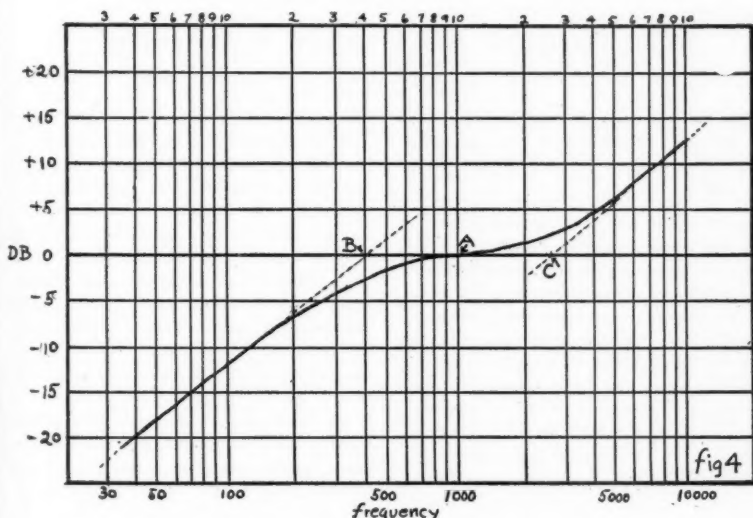
The greatest fallacy of all is the religious adherence to the published turnover frequencies in record reproduction. A properly equalized recording means that electrically all the variations necessitated

by the recording process has been compensated for. It only gives us a starting point for good reproduction, however. Sound is recorded and reproduced in varying acoustic environments. Micro-



(Fig. 5)

Using a straight edge to determine crossover point on a graph.



(Fig. 4)

The AES Curve

A indicates the reference point sometimes erroneously thought to be the turnover. B and C indicate the correct low and high frequency turnovers. The dotted lines have the 6 d.b. per octave slopes determining the exact crossover points. This diagram shows how the actual curve deviates from the theoretical (dotted lines).

phone placement, the level at which the material is reproduced, the speaker system and the pickup all effect tonal balance. Variations in pressings are particularly noticeable at the high end. Finally, personal tastes and preferences have to be considered. It is quite possible that a record reproduced exactly as the engineer intended might not please the individual listener. Because of this, recordings often sound better when played on compensation curves not intended for them.

In the ideal system, a loudness control is used to retain balance at low level listening. This is only an approximation, but in the writer's opinion helps a great deal. It is better to use the proper compensation on all recordings if additional tone controls are provided. After the proper equalization of a recording, these controls may be used to get a pleasing

aural balance. A look at Figure 3 will show that some of the curves are quite close to each other. The ear finds a 1 d.b. change barely perceptible. It is therefore possible to obtain good reproduction from LP in a system having provisions only for NAB and AES compensation. Columbia LPs can be played on NAB and London and RCA New Orthophonic LPs on AES. Here again judicious use of the tone controls is a great help. It is also obvious that the more limited the frequency response of the system the less critical compensation becomes, as compensation has its greatest effect at the extremes of the reproduced range.

The inescapable fact is that sound reproduction in the home at its best is only a miniature facsimile of the original, hence in the ultimate analysis your ear must be the final guide to a satisfactory compromise.

In Honor of Queen Elizabeth

The Triumphs of Oriana in Honor of Queen Elizabeth; The Randolph Singers. Westminster LP set WAL-212, \$11.90.

▲ON THE EVE of the Coronation of Elizabeth II, David Randolph and Westminster have recorded a famous collection of madrigals written in honor of Queen Elizabeth I in her 68th year. The collection was edited by Thomas Morley (1557-c.1602) and originally included 25 madrigals by 23 composers; Ellis Gibbons and Thomas Morley contributing two each while the others one each. There were seven other madrigals which came too late for the original publication. These are also included in the recording. Among the famous madrigalists of this period who composed for the collection are John Bennett, Thomas Morley, Thomas Weelkes, George Kirbye, Thomas Bateson, and Francis Pilkington. One composer, Ellis Gibbons, is represented here by his only known compositions.

Mr. Randolph, who recently gave us a valued disc containing madrigals of

Gesualdo and Monteverdi (Westminster 5171), gives us here the most important and valued collection of English madrigals yet to be recorded. As, in the former collection, he supplies comprehensive notes which cannot fail to be absorbing to the discerning listener with their elucidation of style and effects in the music. Randolph's notes are not only scholarly but sensitive and discerning in their help to musical appreciation. Westminster has supplied an extra leaflet with the text.

The *Triumphs of Oriana*, Mr. Randolph tells us, "was suggested by, and modelled upon, a collection" published nine years previously in Venice called *Il Trionfo di Dori*, in which each madrigal ended with a line "Viva la bella Dori." In the present collection each ends with a refrain, "Long live fair Oriana." One madrigal by Bateson, published after Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, ends with "In heaven lives Oriana." Though all these madrigals are distinguished for their expressiveness and range of emotions, heard in their

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Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Couper

Orchestra

ANTHEIL: *Symphony No. 5*; **JOSTEN:** *Endymion* (Ballet); Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert Haefner. SPA LP-16, \$5.95.

▲SPA Records, which is the Society of Participating Artists, deserves credit for its forward-looking endeavors. It took a long time for a record company to record a symphony by George Antheil, who is one of the most American of all American composers. Self-styled the *Bad Boy of Music* (the title of his autobiography), Antheil has been aptly labelled by Virgil Thomson as "a musical Tom Sawyer, gay, fanciful, ingenuous, self-confident, and comical." Recognize the prevailing American traits? There is something brash, rude and cocksure about Antheil. Once you awaken from the startling effect he imposes — you may find yourself, as the present writer did, rather intrigued with Mr. Antheil's boyish spirit and thoroughly unbuttoned exuberance. He says of his *Fifth Symphony*, it "is to me like a vast joyous cry of freedom, of joy unlimited." Its opening movement derives in spirit from the popular music of our day, and is impetuous and even blatant. It's also ex-

hilarating and lots of fun. Its second movement is mood music—contrast with a vengeance, "fragments, welded into my own melodies, of things remembered from youthful campfires when I was a boy-scout." Antheil could be a good little boy content to dream on occasion. The finale he calls a synthesis. It is mischievous, gay and full of fun. Mr. Haefner has entered into the spirit of Antheil's music and given it a first-rate performance and the engineer's have done a realistic job on their own.

Josten's score is theatre music which undoubtedly identifies itself effectively to its ballet decor, but heard as a concert piece it lacks sustaining interest. One has the feeling that Haefner is lacking in convictions on the character of the music. It is well recorded.

—P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Egmont, Incidental Music*; Lore Wissmann (soprano), Paul Hartmann (narrator), Württemberg State Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Ferdinand Leitner. Decca 10" LP DL7540, \$4.95.

▲THIS IS substantially all of Beethoven's 1810 score for Goethe's tragedy. Included are the famous overture, two songs for Klaerchen, the second and third entr'actes, Klaerchen's death music, dream scene, the final monologue and the

Siegessymphonie. Excluded are the first and fourth entr'actes. These, if one may judge from most of the music heard here excepting the fine overture, are no great loss. This is occasional music and seems to support Goethe's sonorous speeches well but it is no great shakes for listening. The performance is competent. Lore Wissmann sings her two short ballads with sweetness and Paul Hartmann is properly inspired in the 19th-century German theatrical tradition. Leitner's reading does not eclipse Weingartner's interpretation of some of this music but he turns in a sound job. The recording, from Deutsche Grammophon, seems a bit thin. —D.R.

GRIEG: *Symphonic Dances, Op. 64; Norwegian Dances, Op. 35;* Danish National Orchestra of the State Radio conducted by Erik Tuxen. Mercury LP 10132, \$1.85.

▲AN ATMOSPHERIC recording in which a gratifying concert hall tonal quality prevails. D. R., in his review of Litschauer's performance of the *Norwegian Dances* in our March issue, spoke of preferring the latter version to the present. I do not share his preference. It seems to me that Tuxen, by being less athletic in his performance, is truer to Grieg. Tuxen gets the essential bite in the *Symphonic Dances* and a lyrical fluency in both scores that no one has quite as successfully realized. Both conductors are to be admired in their music-making which is far more persuasive than Fistoulari. Interest in Litschauer's disc centers around Sibelius' *Rakastava*. Choice in these records will be governed by their respective couplings. —J.N.

GABRIELI: *Two Canzone for Double String Orchestra;* **TELEMANN:** *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra in G;* Karl Muenchinger conducting the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra with Heinz Kirchner (viola). London 10" LP LS-486, \$1.95.

▲THE GABRIELI compositions were written for responsive playing by two unspecified instrumental groups. Such antiphonal music was successfully pre-

sented at St. Mark's in Venice during the composer's lifetime, with the instrumental choirs on different sides of the church. The poetic beauty and dignity of this music are well exploited by a string orchestra, and Muenchinger's artistic direction with its careful observance of the *pian' e forte* dynamics makes for a lovely short concert. The Telemann concerto is one of his best, proving him a master of expressive *Gebrauchsmusik*. The contrasted style of the work is well thought out, and the writing for the baritone of the strings is highly gratifying. This is the type of music which becomes second-rate in the hands of lesser artists, but it is given distinction in the present performance by Heinz Kirchner, whose viola tone has all the richness of a cello in its middle range, and Muenchinger's fine string orchestra. The recording is splendid, realistic in quality without disturbing edginess to the high strings. —P.H.R.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 1 in D Major;* The Pro Musica Symphony of Vienna conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox LP PL 8050, \$5.95.

▲! HAVE never heard the opening movement of this winning work taken at the turtle's pace elected by Horenstein; likewise the second movement. There is a case to be made for this conception insofar as it lends a cumulative perspective to the unfoldment, and the score markings permit a certain flexibility anyway. But without motion the essence of Mahler, it seems to me, comes out sounding like boiled-over Bruckner. I prefer the Barsamsky performance released by Urania last month, although the Vox recording has a slight edge sonically. —J.L.

MOZART: *Les Petits Riens;* **SCARLATTI:** *The Good Humoured Ladies;* Royal Opera House Orchestra conducted by Warwick Braithwaite. MGM LP E3034, \$1.85.

▲MOZART'S CHARMING pantomime score, written in 1778, contains none of

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his greatest music but it certainly contains some of his most delightful. For the Noverre production the 22 year-old Mozart contributed 14 numbers including an extremely fine overture and a particularly enchanting gavotte, both of which are included in this performance. Braithwaite is scarcely the man for this music. He is a competent theatre man but this is much more than competent theatrical music. To be sure the other LP performances are not much better. It appears on both Period and Vox labels, different orchestras listed but I suspect the same performance. At any rate, Reinhardt, who conducts "both," has the edge only in that he is more energetic. One has to go back to the old Leo Blech performance on 78's to hear the music at its best.

Braithwaite is completely outclassed in the imaginative suite that Tommasini arranged from the sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti in 1917. London has presented us with a truly definitive performance by Désormière. In matter of recording too the latter company has quite the edge. These recordings are satisfactory but certainly nothing exceptional.

—D.R.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Tsar Saltan-Suite*; Radio Berlin Orchestra conducted by Otto Dobrindt; **GLIERE:** *The Red Poppy-Suite*; Radio Berlin Orchestra conducted by Hans Gahlenbeck. Urania LP 7078, \$5.95.

▲**THE Fairy Tale of Tsar Saltan, his Son the Renowned and Mighty Paladin, the Prince Guidon Saltanovich, and the Beautiful Swan, Tsarevna Lebed** is not one of Rimsky's best works. Composed in 1900, its most famous number is the *The Flight of the Bumblebee*. This entr'acte, is not included in the present suite which receives a very heavy and pedestrian performance. Spruit on Concert Hall is somewhat lighter and his recording is much better.

The Rimsky score is sheer enchantment compared with the Glière however. At least we know that Rimsky could be interesting at times. This recording of June, 1953

the Glière does not precisely duplicate the suites on Westminster and Vanguard. Nothing new is added, and the single vaguely amusing item, the *American Dance*, is missing. Scherchen's is the better performance and his recording is far above this one. J —D.R.

SCRIABIN: *The Poem of Ecstasy, Op. 54*; **LOEFFLER:** *A Pagan Poem, Op. 14*; The Paris Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Manuel Rosenthal. Capitol LP P 8188, \$5.00.

▲**COMPLEMENTARY** coupling is the strongest of several reasons why this disc is a rare bargain. Beyond the fact that neither of these compelling scores has received due attention, they have many virtues in common musically and programmatically—although it is perhaps wise to avoid the latter with what the anonymous annotator calls "understandable vagueness." Rosenthal delivers satisfactory performances of both works. The Scriabin does not have quite as much shimmer as it should, but then Rosenthal is not a Stokowski. Capitol sound improves apace; the balance here is excellent. —J.L.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 4 in C Minor (Tragic)*. The Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. London LP LL 736, \$5.95.

▲**THIS HAS** been the season of the Schubert *Ninth*. The work has turned up repeatedly on new LP releases, and it seemed as if one heard it in New York at every other concert. Indeed its "heavenly lengths" have been getting rather difficult to abide. It is therefore a special pleasure to welcome this splendid recording of the much less familiar *Fourth*. Like the ever ingratiating *Fifth* it enjoys the non-Schubertian felicity of expressive economy. Even more than the *Fifth* it holds tight to one's attention and affection. It cannot be said that Van Beinum's interpretation is grateful; to the contrary it tends to be stodgy and the inherent structural weakness of the score is thus

pointed up more than need be. But the performance is altogether substantial just the same and it is surely the best to reach microgroove thus far. The sound is amply extended and evenly distributed. —J.L.

SIBELIUS: *Lemminkäinen Suite*; the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP ML 4672, \$5.45. **SIBELIUS:** *En Saga* and *Tapiola*; the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. London LP LL 737, \$5.95.

▲BOTH of these omnibus recordings are estimable from every point of view. Ormandy has always done handsomely by the quartet of miniature tone poems comprising the *Lemminkäinen* tetralogy, of which the most familiar is of course *The Swan of Tuonela*. The present performance is thoroughly up to prevailing high Philadelphia standards, and likewise the engineering. Of these two discs the second is the more surprising. Certainly Van Beinum is a competent conductor but one did not expect him to challenge the *Tapiola* interpretation of Koussevitsky, in its day a breathtaking accomplishment, or even to match the splendid recent version by Beecham. He has done both. And the inclusion of *En Saga*, one of the finest and unhappily one of the most neglected of the Sibelian evocations, makes this London recording outstanding. The performances are solid without being stuffy. The sound is just a trifle edgy but sweet string tone would not be appropriate here anyway. —J.L.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 39*; the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia LP ML 4653, \$5.45.

▲FOR sheer sound there are few LPs in the same class with Stokowski's version of this perennial work. For all its sonic splendor, however, that was one of the most mischievous readings ever committed to microgroove. Beecham's un-

foldment is more traditionally ordered, less erratic without being less emotional, and withal more compelling. Moreover the engineers have learned a great deal in the past year or two; the present recording is appreciably better balanced than was Stokowski's despite the undeniable excitement of the earlier disc. Some will continue to prefer the authentic Scandinavian flavor of either the Mann-Capitol or Ehring-Mercury interpretations, but neither of these approach Beecham's in concert hall verisimilitude. —J.L.

STILL: *Afro-American Symphony*; Vienna Opera Orchestra conducted by Karl Krueger; Excerpts from *Seven Traceries*—Nos. 1-5; *Blues from Lennox Avenue*; *Three Visions*; Gordon Manley (piano). New Records LP 105, \$5.95.

▲THE Mississippi-born Negro William Grant Still is a singularly gifted composer, who employs characteristic racial themes in an original manner. An expert orchestrator, his symphonies and other compositions have been widely performed by leading conductors in this country and Europe. Dr. Krueger, an admirer of the composer's work, arranged for these recordings while in Vienna last year. They are excellently reproduced.

The *Afro-American Symphony* was composed as an abstract work, though later the composer prefaced each movement with excerpts from poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar. Essentially, the work remains abstract mood music, derived essentially from the inheritance of the Negro race in this country. Still says the symphony "was intended to portray colored Americans of the period following the Civil War, the 'sons of the soil.'" To its movements he gave these titles; Longing, Sorrow, Humor, and Aspiration. Like most mood-music, this symphony is not compelling. Its emotionalism with its deeply yearning qualities, its extraordinary range of thought and feeling and its innate dignity ask for a sympathetic mind which is capable of grasping the significance of the composer's in-

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tentions. Though evoking thoughts and emotions of the past, the music is nonetheless timeless, yet its appeal may well be limited. Dr. Krueger's performance is a highly persuasive one, suggesting his admiration for the composer.

Mr. Still's piano pieces are impressionistic, in general poetic and delicate in texture. While eclectic in character, they bespeak a poetic imagery of their own. What they lack are bold contrasts; they suggest too much a dreamer at the keyboard. The exception is the *Blues*, which though essentially a poet's view of Lennox Avenue, nevertheless has character. Mr. Manley plays them nicely, but unfortunately the recorded piano tone is rather dry and sometimes brittle. —P.H.R.

SWANSON: A Short Symphony; KUPFERMAN: Little Symphony, Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Franz Litschauer. Vanguard LP 434, \$5.95.

▲SWANSON'S symphony won the New York Music Critics Circle award in 1951 and now appears in its first generally available recording. It is a well-written three-movement work, classical in structure and orchestration rather than style. What it says is completely original and well-worth hearing. The American Recording Society issued the work some time ago on a subscription basis directed by Dean Dixon, who has a firmer grasp over the score than Litschauer. Litschauer takes a longer view of it and gives a spacious reading which makes up in breadth what it lacks in excitement.

Even the considerable talents of Litschauer can not quite save the Kupferman symphony which is a poorly balanced *pastiche* involving the styles of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Mozart and, apparently, Mendelssohn. The *Los Angeles Times* called the work, "the American Classical Symphony." If we can not do better than this we had better stop. It is odd, too, coming from Kupferman, whose delightful short opera, *In a Garden*, will be remembered by all who saw it when it was in the repertoire of the After-Dinner Opera Company several years

ago. The recordings of both works are good, that for the Swanson being the better. —D.R.

Concerto

BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15; Friedrich Wuehrer (piano) and the Vienna State Philharmonia conducted by Hans Swarowsky. Vox LP PL-8000, \$5.95.

BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 2 in B Flat, Op. 83; Monique de la Brucholierie (piano) and the Pro Musica Orchestra of Stuttgart conducted by Rolf Reinhardt. Vox LP PL 7950, \$5.95.

▲THE *D Minor* has always left me cold but I must concede that Wuehrer's dedication to its Arctically sunny glow is persuasive, if not really warm. I was conditioned for a change of heart by a recent live performance in which William



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Irving Kolodin; Saturday Review, N.Y.

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Here are a few of them: ANSERMET; COLLINS; EREDE; KRIPS; MUNCH; BOYD NEEL; TUXEN; GRILLER QUARTET; ITALIAN QUARTET; CURZON; GULDA; KATCHEN; LYMPANY; DEMESSIEUX; NELSOVA; DANCO; GUEDEN; TEBALDI; FERRIER; SOUZAY; SCHOEFLER.

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Kapell played the solo part. He, too, managed to bring some light into its murky and austere lengths. The fact that Kapell has been doing the piece all over this past season is fair warning that he is likely to be recording it soon, and some will want to await his redoubtable triumph over the ungrateful assignment. Myself, I like Wuehrer's nice admixture of poetry and passion.

As to the *B Flat*, there are those who will prefer Mlle. de la Bruchollerie's winged traversal to the more Olympian one of Rubinstein's released by Victor last month. Certainly this is the most felicitous and fetching of the several available interpretations. She somehow makes Brahms sing even when he is storming, and this happy faculty strikes me as more efficacious than its more familiar converse. Her tempi are precipitous but consistently so, and there is an overall plastic unity which cannot be minimized, despite the occasional dropped notes. As with the *D Minor*, the accompaniment is wholly adequate and the recorded sound is good all along the range. —J.L.

CHOPIN: *Concerto No. 1 in E minor, Op. 11*; Gyorgy Sandor (piano) with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP ML-4651, \$5.45.

▲LAST month I had occasion to review a performance of this work by Mieczyslaw Horszowski, whose natural gift for making music was not exploited in the usual virtuoso style of the concert hall. Such salon artistry is less sure-fire box-office these days. The Sandor performance is definitely related to the modern concert hall, but unlike Brailowsky he does not dramatize the music as well as his own artistic prowess. His piano tone lacks the caressing qualities of Horszowski, it is scintillating with articulation that is clean and ever exact. He and Ormandy make a great deal more of the opening movement and the finale in that modern showy way. Those who like wonderful orchestral playing with sumptuous tone and fullest sound will like these movements. The slow movement is lacking in

poetic feeling from the pianist; it is Ormandy who supplies this. Perhaps Sandor is too close to the microphone for the good of his piano tone; it glitters too much and does not have the coloring which Chopin invites. But for sheer finger mechanics, his playing is an art unto itself. No one needs to be told about the quality of recording from the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, though I have heard better balance between piano and orchestra in that hall.

—P.H.R.

HANDEL: *Concertos for Viola and Orchestra—in B minor* (arr. Casadesus), —in *G minor*; —in *B flat*; Emanuel Vardi (viola) with the Stradivari Chamber Orchestra. Stradivari LP 617, \$5.95.

▲THE FIRST of these concertos is an arrangement by Henri Casadesus. Its authenticity may be open to question but few will deny its serviceability to a violist. It has been more widely played in recent years than the other two concertos which, if I am not mistaken, are recorded here for the first time. The *B flat major* is a very lovely, small work that deserves to be heard oftener. Mr. Vardi is an excellent violist, but his tone does not always sound to advantage against the massed strings of the ensemble. The recording is larger sounding, more realistic, than some from this concern. There is generally a good balance between soloist and strings.

—D.R.

KHACHATURIAN: *Concerto for 'Cello and Orchestra*; Sviatoslav Knushevitsky ('cello) and the State Orchestra of the U. S. S. R. conducted by Alexander Gauk. Vanguard LP VRS 6009, \$5.95.

▲IT MAY be, just as Sidney Finkelstein writes in the jacket notes, that in this postwar work "Khachaturian has surpassed his previous concertos for piano and violin in the brilliance with which he has woven a web of national melody over the framework of the classical concerto form." On short acquaintance I am inclined to take issue with the an-

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notator as to the comparative brilliance of the piece *per se*, although the subterfuge of orthodoxy is brilliantly executed. The recent Soviet ukase against modernism did not unduly burden Khachaturian because he is not a strikingly original composer. But nobody has access to a more plentiful supply of viable folk materials and once again he has employed them here in sure-fire fashion. The supporting forces are quite adequate without ever rising to resplendence. The recording itself is better than we have come to expect from Moscow tapes. —J.L.

MOZART: *Flute Concerto in G, K. 313*; *Flute Concerto in D, K. 314*; Fernand Marseau (Flute) and Jean-Pierre Rampal (Flute) and the Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Arthur Goldschmidt. Period LP disc SPL 564, \$5.95.

▲ONE OF the surest ways to lose one's mind is to listen to a dozen or so different flutists, one after the other, and then try to catalogue the different tone qualities heard. After listening to earlier records of Rampal together with the two pieces on this disc, I finally became so confused that I am almost willing to state that Merseau sounds more like Rampal and the new Rampal sounds better than ever.

Some of the features of Rampal's playing on earlier records were open to question. In this Mozart Concerto he has lost the former breathiness, the occasional edginess of tone, the rhythmic uncertainty. His tone has taken on a suavity, a pearly limpidity that is most ravishing. The equalization of registers is particularly well controlled, the overall character of the sound gaining a certain sweetness and tranquility that it did not have before.

His disc-mate, Merseau, plays in such a similar style that it could well be Rampal himself playing on a cloudy day. The sound on the Merseau side is a trifle more open, but the phrasing and style of playing are identical.

It's a pity the accompaniment isn't more in keeping with the high quality of the solo efforts. The orchestral playing is rough, slipshod and tired-sounding. One good four-hour rehearsal would have

made all the difference in the world.

In spite of this defect flutomanes should (and undoubtedly will) acquire this disc. It is an important addition to the library of woodwind classics, as these are undoubtedly the best solo performances now available on records. —A.W.P.

MOZART: *Concerto in C, K. 467*; *Concerto in D, K. 537 (Coronation)*; Joerg Demus (piano) with Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Milan Horvath. Westminster LP WL-5183, \$5.95.

MOZART: *Concerto in C, K. 467*; *Concerto in C, K. 503*; Marguerite Roesgen-Champion (piano) with Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Arthur Goldschmidt. Period LP 571, \$5.95.

▲THE REPRODUCTION in both records is realistic, but that in the Westminster is far better balanced notably on the instrument side. Mme. Roesgen-Champion seems to have been placed farther forward than Mr. Demus, which does not make for good balance. This is not desirable in Mozart concertos. Young Demus is



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a singularly gifted artist. His pianism is a pleasure to the ear with its tonal warmth and rhythmic fluency. What he lacks is the intensification that the *C major* invites—the rhythmic firmness as well as tonal mood changes. Even Mozart has climaxes which are definitely felt if not outlined in the music score. For this reason, I like his playing of the *D major* better, which is a far less closely knit opus. But one cannot discount his *C major* for Milan Horvath is a vital Mozartean conductor, with the requisite incisiveness and intensity which make for enjoyable Mozart playing. One wonders about the preparation of performances like this, for here one feels pianist and conductor should have got together and worked out some mutual stylistic agreement. Horvath tends to steal the show from Demus. None of the LP performances of the *C major* has the pianistic eminence of the 78 rpm release of Schnabel, and Landowska's *D major* is definitely in a class of its own.

As for the Roesgen-Champion and Goldschmidt rendition of the *C major*; this is not even in the same class as the Demus-Horvath. The lady is a competent musician but her playing of Mozart is too conscientious like an eminently correct Sunday School teacher. Goldschmidt is not in the same class as Horvath; his orchestral direction tends to bumpiness and the stress of irrelevant climaxes. One can hardly believe that any amount rehearsal time went into these performances. —P.H.R.

Chamber Music

BARTOK: *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin; Contrasts for Violin Clarinet and Piano*; Robert Mann (Violin), Stanley Drucker (Clarinet) and Leonid Hambro (Piano). Bartok Records LP disc (no number), \$5.95.

BARTOK: *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin*; Wandy Tworak (Violin). London 10" LP disc LS 711, \$4.95.

▲THE SONATA was written for Menuhin in 1944. It is a "tough piece," both for player and listener. Menuhin has recorded it, (Victor LM-1087). Theoretically his version should be the preferred one; in this case, however, I would recommend Mann's disc, as the coupling with the spicy *Contrasts* will offer an opportunity to assimilate some of the more digestible facets of Bartok's musical personality while resting between rounds of the Sonata.

Let's face it, this is music one must work to enjoy. It is tough, wiry, aggressive, uncompromising and thoroughly honest. How many people will be able to enjoy it I cannot guess, but I will guarantee that those who have the determination to lay open its entrails and probe its sinews to their point of origin will not regret the effort.

Mann is first violinist of the Juillard Quartet, a group that specializes in modern music and which, incidentally, has given some outstanding performances of Bartok's Quartets.

It's no contest so far as London's entry is concerned. First of all, they have split the Sonata on two sides of a 10-inch disc, which makes for poor continuity and poor value. For a dollar more you can get another score of similar length thrown in for good measure. If the performance of Tworak were outstanding, one would naturally bypass the consideration of value received. It is not, unfortunately; Tworak plays all the notes (so far as I can tell) but does not manage to make a great deal out of them.

Let us not forget the *Contrasts*. This is a fine piece, one of Bartok's best and one of the important chamber pieces of the last twenty years. Performance and recording are both excellent. This is the only version on LP so far. Don't miss it! —A.W.P.

BEETHOVEN: *String Quartet No. 14 in C Sharp Minor*; The Paganini Quartet. RCA Victor LP LM 1736, \$5.72.

▲IT LOOKS as if no ensemble could match the achievement represented by

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the old Budapest recording of this knotty but rewarding dilemma of a work. I mean the one of ten years or so ago. Even the recent LP performance by the same organization falls shy of that earlier criterion, although it is infinitely superior reproductively. The current Budapest version is not as finely woven as their first but certainly it is more idiomatic than this latest interpretation by the Paganini group. The Paganinis are short on vigor and intensity, a dual defection bound to downgrade the authenticity of their Beethoven readings. But not even the Budapesters of a decade ago could vouchsafe such a gorgeous sound. The Paganinis purr like four pussy cats rolled into one. Their caressing tone is something out of this world, and the engineers were right on the job to capture its magic. If only the Budapest vitality and Paganini smoothness were not, as they seem to be, mutually exclusive.

—J.L.

BORODIN: *Quartet No. 2 in D*; **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Quartet No. 1 in D, Op. 11*; The Hollywood String Quartet. Capitol LP P-8187, \$1.98.

▲EXCELLENT recording which gives realistic presence to the performers. The Hollywood String Quartet rates among the best organizations of its kind now recording and their work deserves high tribute. My only criticism is that the first violin sometimes stands out too prominently, upsetting an otherwise fine balance.

Both of these quartets have slow movements which are better known than the complete works. Borodin's *Nocturne* and Tchaikovsky's *Andante cantabile* have a displaced popularity which has retarded their enjoyment in context for many. Borodin was a proficient chamber music player and his quartet is a well written opus if not a consequential one to its form. The Tchaikovsky is full of youthful fantasy. Its *Andante* derived from a folk tune, deserves its popularity with musicians and the general public for its ingenious writing. The *finale* with its vigor sustains listener interest for its healthful exuberance. —P.H.R.

June, 1953

FRANCK: *Sonata for Cello and Piano*; **GRIEG:** *Sonata in A minor, Op. 36* Leonard Rose (cello) and Leonid Hambro (piano). Columbia LP ML-4652, \$5.45.

▲THESE WORKS do not show of Mr. Rose's talents to best advantage, but he certainly gives them the best performances so far on LP. The Franck sonata, a cello version of the familiar *A major* one for violin and piano, has become for many an irritating piece of music. Far more than the Symphony or the Quartet does this work smells of the lamp. With indefatigable patience, the composer forces his themes to undergo all possible permutations and combinations. It is perhaps more successful in the violin version.

The Grieg opus, except for a pleasant folk-like finale, seems devoid of any sustaining interest except possibly for cellists. The slow movement bears a startling resemblance to the March from *Sigurd Jorsafar*, which many regard as a lugubrious piece of music. Splendidly realistic recording is lavished on both works.

—D.R.

GEMINIANI: *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin*; **STRAVINSKY:** *Elegie for Violin Unaccompanied*; **OSTROVSKY:** *Capriccio Orientale, Impromptu and Je pense à mon amour*; Fredy Ostrovsky (violin). Classic Editions LP CE 1029, \$5.95.

▲SYMPHONY orchestras are sanctuary to some of our finest musicians. Janos Starker, the superb cellist of the Metropolitan pit, is perhaps the most notable example. This recording introduces another. Fredy Ostrovsky is one of Munch's anonymous redoubtables up in Boston. Psychologically it is of passing interest that Ostrovsky, like Starker in his LP efforts, should choose to address himself to a series of unaccompanied works. Apparently even the minimal collaboration will not do for an artist given a chance to be heard by himself for once. Be that as it may, Ostrovsky has a big, bushy tone and his technique is as clean as grandma's kitchen. He has constructed

his recital with shrewdness, too. Throughout he is heard to splendid advantage. The original compositions are no great shakes; as sophisticated essays in the Bulgar idiom they are easy to take except when their eclecticism shows. There are moments redolent of *Baal Shem*, for instance.

—J.L.

HANDEL: *Sonatas for Recorder*; Alfred Mann (recorder); Helmut Reinmann (cello) and Helma Elsner (harpsichord). Vox LP PL-7910, \$5.95.

▲THESE are a part of Handel's *Opus 1, Fifteen Solos with a Thorough Bass*. They are good "middle" Handel. Nothing too exciting happens, but one always listens with a lively interest. You might, if you are an admirer of the recorder, want this disc more for the performance than for the music, because it is exceptionally fine. Alfred Mann's prowess on his chosen instrument is well-known and he was never more expert. In addition, this combination of soloists is a particularly happy one. The recording is quite faithful and the faint noise of the harpsichord quills and the sound of Mr. Mann drawing breath after an extended passage only add to the intimacy of the recording.

—D.R.

ITALIAN BAROQUE MUSIC: *Concerto in A minor, Op. 3, No. 8; Cantata—Cessate omai; Sinfonia No. 2 in G* (Vivaldi); *Concerto Grosso in F, Op. 1, No. 4* (Marcello); *Suonerà l'ultima tromba* from *Oratorio Giudizio Universale* (Carissimi); *Concerto Grosso in E minor, Op. 3, No. 3* (Germiniani); Società Corelli with Luisa Ribacchi (mezzo-soprano). RCA Victor LP LM-1767, \$5.72.

▲HONORING the 300th Anniversary of Corelli's birth, this new instrumental group recently formed in Italy has taken the composer's name to identify itself. The Società Corelli is an accomplished ensemble of musicians who perform handsomely the music of their earlier countrymen. With them is a gifted singer, whose vocal beauty gives distinction to those works in which she participates. The

reproduction of this program has been carefully engineered for realism and tonal wealth. The playing here does not have the classical purity and the clarity of line of the Virtuoso di Roma. There is more of a lushness of sound. Though I miss the intensity of solo voices and the nuanced subtleties of Fasano's Virtuosi di Roma, I feel certain no one listening to these performances could fail to be wooed by the beauty of sound in them.

The three Vivaldi works prove the enduring freshness of this composer's music. It is good to have the *A minor Concerto*, familiar in Bach's transcription, in its original form so well played. The chamber cantata is a most welcome addition to his recorded repertoire. Marcello's and Geminiani's concertos are fine examples of early 18th-century chamber orchestral writing with their characteristic expressive ardor of these Italian composers. The excerpt from Carissimi's oratorio with its contrapuntal virtuosity and dramatic expressiveness has enduring vitality. Too bad the notes fail to give the translation of the words among other important historical omissions of factual values.

—P.H.R.

ROSSINI (arr. Casella): *Sonata for Violin, Cello and Double Bass*; **VENETIAN SCHOOL** (Anon): *Concerto in C minor for Oboe and Strings*; **CAMBINI**: *Concerto in G for Piano and Strings*; **BONPARTI**: *Recitative for Violin and Strings*; Virtuoso di Roma, Renato Fasano (Director). Decca LP DL-9674, \$5.95.

▲THIS IS ONE of the most attractive programs that Virtuoso di Roma has given us. It is excellently recorded with fine clarity of line and instrumental timbre. Rossini's *Sonata*, much in the style of a concerto grosso, is a delightful work. It proves that he was equally adept in the classical type of composition, to which he adds a flavor all his own—exuberance and gusto. What spontaneity the old boy had, but he could be correctly sober, as in his attractive *Andante*. His final rondo is fascinating with its thumping basses and rushing scales.

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The *Oboe Concerto* by an unknown composer is equally engaging for its melodic beauty and charm. Cambini was once introduced on records by a quartet which proved most engaging. His concerto has freshness and spontaneity and more than a suggestion of Mozart. It is worth knowing. Bonporti's *Recitative* is an effective piece of its kind, more serious in its classical declamatory style. It seems to be one of the only works by which this late 17th-century composer, who in his time was an important innovator in instrumental music, is remembered today.

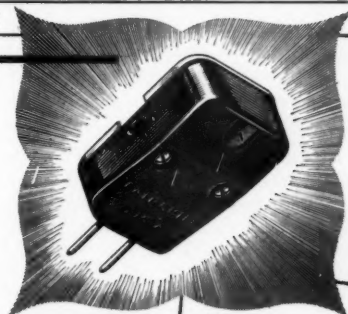
The Virtuosi di Roma, in their field the exceptional exponents of early Italian music, perform all these works with expressive fervor and technical assurance. —P.H.R.

SCHUBERT: *Octet in F major, Op. 166*; Ensemble of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Decca LP 9669, \$5.95.

▲THERE SEEMS to be two schools of thought concerning this strange piece of music. Some think it among the duller works ever written; others consider

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it the apotheosis of Schubert's genius. The truth doubtless lies in the middle. Certainly some of its six sections make one wish the composer had stopped and thought them over again. But others, like the final movement, are completely captivating. This performance seems to be as much of two minds as the work itself is. Often the ensemble performs with an accord which is admirable; at other times, particularly in the opening movement, there seems a definite unwillingness to arrive at the really precise unanimity of approach which is so necessary in a work as verbose as this one. The recording, from Deutsche Grammophon, does not help anything. There seems a disproportionate distance between the various instruments but, then again, a string quartet, bass, clarinet, horn and bassoon are difficult to keep in complete register. None of the other LP versions of this work are completely satisfying but, for recording and performance, I would suggest the Westminster. —D.R.

SCHUBERT: *Rondo Brillante in B minor, Op. 70*; Joseph Szigeti (violin) and Carlo Bussotti (piano); **BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata in G, Op. 96*; Mr. Szigeti and Meiczyslaw Horszowski (piano). Columbia LP ML-4612, \$5.45.

▲THE SCHUBERT rondo is written in a much more fervent manner than we associate with the composer. Or perhaps it is just that Szigeti sustains the fire in this slender score. Written in 1826, the work seems actually an exhibition piece. At any rate it is all fireworks and Szigeti comes off with honors.

The Beethoven palm does not belong to him, however. Though he is more fluent than either Spivakovsky or Fuchs he does not quite manage that quality of the elegiac, so fitting for this sonata, which imbued Fournier's performance. Part of this might be the fact that the latter violinist and Jean Doyen were almost perfectly matched, while Szigeti and Horszowski seem to have very definite, but different, ideas concerning the work. It is a brilliant performance,

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beautifully recorded—as is the Schubert—but, for me, it lacks the unanimity belonging to a Beethoven sonata. —D.R.

Keyboard

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 13 in E flat, Op. 27, No. 1*; *No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2*; *No. 19 in G minor, Op. 49 No. 1*; *No. 20 in G, Op. 49, No. 2*; Wilhelm Backhaus (piano). London LP disc LL-705, \$5.95.

▲A CLEAR, close-up recording reveals Backhaus' latest performances in his project of presenting all 32 Beethoven piano sonatas. They are hardly the best work we have had from him in this series, or the poorest either, for that matter. These have traces of the sluggishness which has occasionally kept some of his performances from taking flight. Stylistically, they are assured; and Backhaus seldom makes ugly noises with his instrument. But in the overplayed though still effective *Moonlight Sonata*, for example, there is not the quiet tension in the first movement, the delicacy in the second, or the driving impact in the third in the proportion that Backhaus once gave us in his earlier HMV performance. The other three works are somewhat inconsequential in the Beethoven catalog, especially the *Op. 49* which was written early in the composer's career (before 1795) and probably not intended for publication. It is thanks to Beethoven's brother Caspar, who sent them to the publisher without permission, that we know them at all. —C.J.L.

HANDEL: *Suites for Harpsichord, Book II, Nos. 2 through 6*; Frank Pelleg (harpsichord); Handel Society 7, \$5.95.

▲WITH THIS DISC, I believe, Mr. Pelleg completes his performances of the entire Handel suites, with some other items thrown in for good measure, (the other discs are Handel Society Nos. 4, 5, and 6). Making these suites available

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is a great service and though some may not precisely agree with Mr. Pelleg's interpretations they would not, I think, disagree that, within their restrictions, they are fine performances. These restrictions, as I have indicated in previous reviews, are most personal ones. Mr. Pelleg interprets rather than merely performs this music and though his performances may be different from say, Landowska's, they are nonetheless musically cogent and technically expert. The recording is quite fine, well up to the level of the three previous records.

—D.R.

SCHUMANN: *Sonata in G minor, Op. 22* and *Intermezzi, Op. 4*; Grant Johannesen (piano). Concert Hall LP disc CHS-1173, \$5.95.

▲DURING the past three seasons, it has become increasingly apparent that Grant Johannesen is one of the most talented pianists of his generation and perhaps the best young American keyboard artist working today. Certainly his playing on this smoothly recorded disc augurs well for his future releases (and we hope there will be many more) under the Concert Hall imprint.

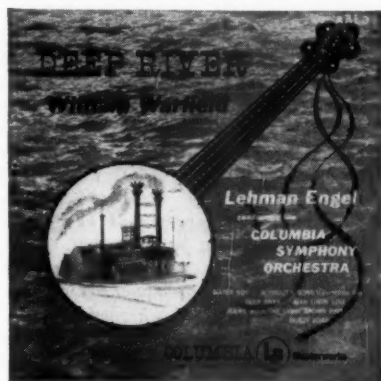
In your reviewer's opinion, these are the most sensitive and effective performances of solo Schumann piano works recorded since the war. Johannesen's limpid tone, creamy legato, and all round technical brilliance put at the service of a most arresting musical art makes these highly individual and touching pieces seem as memorable as they used to seem when Cortot's physical resources were still unimpaired by the ravages of time. There is plentiful passion without pounding, a care for the composer's directions, and a kind of sustained poetry rare in anyone's playing today.

—C.J.L.

WEBER: *Sonata in E minor, Op. 70, No. 4*; **MALIPIERO:** *Poemi asolani*; Helen Schnabel (piano). SPA LP 15, \$5.95.

▲MRS. SCHNABEL, wife of Karl Ulrich and a pupil of his late father, is a sensitive and forceful artist. Her playing,

judged from these realistic recordings, is tonally rich and smooth. Her choice of compositions offers widely varied moods in music—the early Romantic piano work (1822) of von Weber and the “atonal” one of Malipiero dating from 1916. The former is more a fantasia than a true sonata, far less adventuresome than even the youthful Beethoven, but substantial in its orchestral texture and appealing for its sensual richness. Malipiero's *Poems of Asolo*, inspired by World War I, are deeply felt with some of the most exquisite dissonances imaginable. His rich basses and contrasting tonalities recall Debussy's use of the lower part of the piano in *The Sunken Cathedral*, though Malipiero's music has a definite Italianate character of its own. Mrs. Schnabel's pedalling in these pieces is as effective as it is judicious; she does not permit the texture to become blurred. There is an introspective quality to this music, suggesting the searchings of a sensitive poet within himself for answers to his reactions to a war-torn world, yet there is no morbidity. The three poems



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are entitled *The Night of the Dead*, *Annals*, and *The Departed*. There is no program. The recording of this piano work is in many ways remarkable for the richness of its deep basses. —P.H.R.

Voice

CLASSICAL ARIAS: *Mentri ti lascio, o figlia*, K. 513 (Mozart); *Sedecia—Caldo sangue* (Scarlatti-Dorumsgaard); *Alceste—Il faut passer* (Lully); *Cadmus et Hermoine—Belle Hermoine, hélas* (Lully); *Les Pèlerins de la Mecque—C'est un torrent impétueux* (Gluck); *Castor et Pollux—Nature, amour* (Rameau); Gérard Souzay (baritone) with Robert Cornman conducting L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire. London 10" LP LS-730, \$4.95.

▲**SPLENDID** sounding recording with both orchestra and singer presence make this a most enjoyable operatic recital. Mr. Souzay has chosen his arias very well for contrast especially, the four French ones on side two. The gifted baritone sings well in every case, but I think he is more at home in the French airs which suit his voice best. He lacks the intensity implied in the concert aria of Mozart in which a father's grief is expressed over the parting from his daughter. Tajo and Pinza have both sung this aria on records with deeper dramatic feeling, but Souzay with his fine musicianship and eloquence commands respect. The Scarlatti is from an oratorio. It is sung by the dying Ishmael, who bids "his hot blood which bathes his breast to leave him and let him die." A larger voice than Souzay's would realize more drama and also climaxes. In the four French selections, Souzay's voice fits each like the proverbial glove, imparting the feeling of each with understanding artistry. This is really a delightful record recital of its kind and well worth acquiring. Mr. Cornman's orchestral accompaniments are exception-

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ally well handled. It is good to see this gifted American pianist realizing an ambition he had in this country to conduct. As an old friend, I applaud him in his latest work. —P.H.R.

BUXTEHUDE: *Cantatas*, No. 25, *Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben*; No. 26, *Ich bin eine Blume zu Saron*; No. 27, *Mein Herz ist bereit*; Bruno Mueller (basso), Eva Hoelderlin (organ) and the Pro Musica Orchestra of Stuttgart conducted by Hans Grischkat. *Cantata* No. 38, *O lux beata Trinitas*; Margot Guillaume and Barbara Groth (sopranos) with Instrumental Ensemble of the Bach Anniversary, Hamburg, conducted from the organ by Marie-Luise Bechert. Vox LP disc PL 7620, \$5.95.

▲**EVERY** Buxtehude recording is valuable, especially those that uncover more of the buried treasure in his cantatas. This disc contains, so far as we know, all that he wrote for the solo bass voice and a lovely piece for two sopranos. If I were to pick a favorite among these solo cantatas it would be the appealing *Ich bin eine Blume zu Saron*, perhaps because of the beauty of its text from the *Song of Songs*. Mr. Mueller, well known for his part in numerous recent Stuttgart recordings, is a musical and sincere artist with a good healthy voice. If he misses the spark of true distinction, his singing still will be enjoyed. Perhaps the answer is not to take the cantatas all in one sitting.

The two sopranos come as a pleasant change with their bright and charming voices. There is a curious change, too, in their placement—Mueller sounds close to the microphone, but the ladies seem to be in the chancel and we in the nave of the church. Apparently it is a good sized church. —P.L.M.

DONIZETTI: *Lucia di Lammermoor—Mad Scene*; **THOMAS:** *Hamlet—Mad Scene*; Mado Robin (soprano) with Richard Blareau conducting L'Orchestre de la Société du Conservatoire de Paris. London 10" LP LS-676, \$4.95.

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▲CHALK UP an excellent recording which gives a coloratura plenty of orchestral sound behind her soaring notes. Miss Robin has one of the phenomenal coloratura voices of our time, clear and certain though not as beautiful as some sopranos who have sung these arias. But she can hit high tones as few have been able to do with the certainty that she does—one in *Lucia* that is around high B flat above high C. The remarkable part of her voice is that her highest flights into alt are not just runs or slide-ups or touchings on notes as with Erna Sack and some others, but real tones. My own idea of Lucy from reading Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* and of Ophelia from reading Shakespeare's *Hamlet* at an early age is that these heroines were two gentle young ladies who sought an escape from the world in flights of fancy rather than in flights in alt. I've never quite resigned myself to what Donizetti and Thomas did to these girls, but I have been intrigued with the pyrotechnics of some great ladies in the opera house. Miss Robin left me spellbound and also wondering how she felt after her brilliant performances of these famous operatic "mad scenes."
—J.N.

MONTEVERDI: *Vespro Della Beata Virgine* (1610) (Edition—Hans F. Redlich): Margot Guillaume, Friderike Sailer (sopranos), Lotte Wolf-Matthaeus (alto), Heinz Marten, Werner Hohmann (tenors), Franz Kelch (bass), Reingold Barchet, Andrea Steffen-Wendling (violins), Wather Biller (viola da gamba), Helma Elsner (harpsichord), Herbert Liedecke (organ), the Swabian Choral Singers of Stuttgart, the Stuttgart Bach Orchestra, conducted by Hans Grischkat. Vox LP set PL-7902, two discs, \$11.90.

▲THROUGH recordings, the genius of Monteverdi is being revealed more and more. This is the most auspicious opus of his to be recorded to date. For all the historical significance of his *Orfeo*, this *Vesper* has a timelessness in appeal that the opera does not own. Its musical communication with humanity and truth,

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its beauty in expression, cannot fail to appeal. Emotionally as well as imaginatively it holds the listener and, to me, it is a listening adventure in religious music the like of which one does not encounter in history until Bach and Beethoven. The reason is understandable, for Monteverdi has not been conservative in the manner of those who came before him; he has evoked an individual style of concerted vocal and instrumental writing. The style is a blend of the old and new in which he has contrived unusual dramatic possibilities. He has remembered the brilliance and the *fioritura* used in opera and other secular music, he has employed chromaticism and daring contrasts in sonority, and he has, in his scoring, realized a greater wealth of tonal coloring. He has been as personal in his emotional expression as the romantics of the 19th century, and yet he does not refute the devotional or religious character of the texts for all the sensual beauty of his musical settings. His re-use of Gregorian motives recalls to mind the words of our departed friend Paul Rosenfeld, who began an article on Monteverdi in this manner: "The masterworks resemble the gods of old. Their beauties shine through heavy disguises, revealing their identities, imparting intuitions of the grandeur of their parents."

Since Monteverdi's *Vesper* does not come down to us in a practical performing version, this presentation is the work of Hans F. Redlich, who contributes the notes. In order to keep the music within the limits of a two hour time element (actually the timing of the *Vesper* in this recording is one hour and forty-two minutes), it omits two *Psalms* and a smaller *Magnificat* and rearranges the order of the movements and "edits the vocal parts, adds dynamics and reduces time values." The aim of the arranger was to achieve a practical edition which, considering resultant performances since it was made in 1934, would seem to be accepted as a successful one.

Not having access to the original score, any comment would be largely conjectural. Redlich has in his re-arrangement

of the sections evidently considered carefully contrast which, it seems to me, is important in a work of this kind especially in repeated performances from records. The *Vesper* opens with *Deus in auditorium* in which Monteverdi invests the text with a rightful elation. *Duo Seraphim* follows. Then comes the first of three Psalm settings—*Dixit Dominus*. Here the expressive powers of the composer's handling of text are striking. Redlich places the antiphon *Nigra sum* next as, he says, it is the proper one for the next Psalm *Laelatus sum*. The antiphon *Puchra es* (a lovely setting) precedes the more dramatic Psalm *Laudate pueri*, in which Redlich has added strings to Monteverdi's organ accompaniment to support the chorus. A *Cantio*, *Audio coelum* with a non-liturgical text, in which the composer returns to the polyphonic style of the past, comes next. The hymn *Ave maris stella*, treated in an original manner, follows. In the succeeding Sonata sopra *Sancta Maria*, Monteverdi in his orchestral opening with its trumpet flourishes evokes the theatre, dramatically heightening the plea of the text—"Holy Mary, pray for us." The drama of the concluding *Magnificat* brings this great work to an auspicious close.

The recording of the *Vesper* is obviously wide-ranged but the reproduction is not fully successful. There is a persistent echo which diffuses the lines of the chorus and the instruments. The voices are not well balanced. The women soloists dominate, the tenors are not as forward in sound and the bass is strangely in the background. The singing of the chorus is tonally good, that of the women, especially Margot Guillaume who is soloist in the *Pulchra es*, admirable. The two tenors, who tend to bleat a bit, are apparently not too comfortable in *fioritura* passages, while the bass is no more than adequate. Despite these criticisms one does not find the singing of a displeasing character. The instrumental background is excellent and the use of a viola da gamba and harpsichord are laudable observance of the music's period. The direction of Hans Grischkat is praiseworthy.

—P.H.R.

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MOZART: Concert Arias—*Ah, lo previdi!* K 272; *Chi sa, chi sa, qual sia,* K 582; *Vado, ma dove?* K 583; *Ch'io mi scorda di te?* K 505; *Bella mia Fiamma,* K 528; Magda Laszlo and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera, Argeo Quadri, conducting. Westminster LP 5179, \$5.95.

▲YOU WILL probably not want to play all five of these Mozart concert arias at one sitting, but you will be glad to know that these rarely performed compositions are a part of your record library. Included are the three extended arias, *Ch'io mi scordi di te?*, *Bella mia Fiamma*, and *Ah, lo previdi!* Combined, they employ some 35 minutes of playing-time. Most striking is the former with its closely interwoven voice and piano dialogue. This was written by Mozart while he was occupied with *Nozze di Figaro*. The impressive *Bella mia Fiamma*, composed in the autumn of 1787, when the Prague performances of *Don Giovanni* were taking place, shows kinship with that great *dramma giocoso* in its sombreness of hue and in its dramatic feeling.

Westminster has done an excellent job with this unusual fare, employing the young Italo-Hungarian soprano, Magda Laszlo. Miss Laszlo is a specialist in classic music. Her handling of the extended recitatives shows that she is an expert in this type of aria. She maintains a strong, almost steely vocal line with unflagging firmness, and she sings with a certain detachment which is quite appropriate. Her voice is a fine one, though rather of one color, and she vocalizes well.

The Vienna State Opera Orchestra, under Argeo Quadri, is also an experienced element, when it comes to Mozart. Surfaces and reproduction are satisfactory.

—M. de S.

SCHUMANN: *Liederkreis, Op. 39* (12 Lieder); Suzanne Danco (soprano) with Guido Agosti (piano). London 10" LP LS-590, \$4.95.

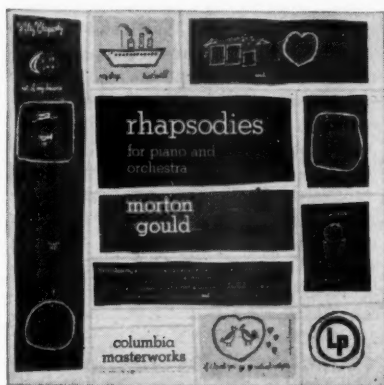
▲THIS DISC only increases one's respect for Suzanne Danco as a singer of lieder. Sensitive and fine-grained, Miss Danco produces her bright tones with

admirable freedom in these exquisite Schumann songs. *Liederkreis* is one of the less frequently performed of the famous song-cycles as a unit. It contains some of the best known items of the lieder repertory which are separated from the cycle in concert.

There is variety indeed in these twelve songs: the relaxed, contemplative spirit of *Mondnacht*, the joyous lyricism of *Fruehlingsnacht*, the nostalgic sadness of *In der Fremde*, and the eerie magic of *Waldesgesprach*.

Miss Danco's musicianally phrasing is a delight. Technically sure, she is able to give free rein to her subtle understanding of these songs though she does not make the most of every change of mood in the texts. Guido Agosti's accompaniments are among the best one has heard, and the balance between voice and piano is all one could ask. Surfaces on this particular copy were plagued by clicks, and the reproduction of the voice tended to become fuzzy as the needle approached the label.

—M. de S.



First Performance!

Never before recorded or performed! Morton Gould arranges, conducts and plays six new symphonic mood-interpretations incorporating ten popular songs. A high fidelity recording exclusively on Columbia "LP."

BANCHIERI: *Festino*; Blanche Wino-
gton (virginal) and the Primavera
Singers of the Pro Musica Antiqua of
New York conducted by Noah Green-
berg. Esoteric LP ES 516, \$5.95.

▲ESOTERIC is especially proud of this recording, and properly so. Adriano Banchieri (1567-1644) was an Olivetan monk who enjoyed a certain eminence in the days of Monteverdi, Frescobaldi and Giovanni Gabrieli. He was not as revolutionary as they were but his es-cutcheon apparently deserves more honor than a careless posterity has tendered it. Locally he is famous after a fashion; in Bologna he is a patron saint of music. The present work is a kind of Renaissance madrigal-comedy which was published in 1608. There is no plot as such; just good clean fun and some of it not so clean. There is a Rabelaisian flavor about it. In sum it is a 16th century precursor of the Broadway musical. The work was designed to be sung on "Fat Thursday before supper," so that it might be conceived as the last temporal pleasure before Lent. Doubtless that explains, and perhaps justifies, the occasional irreverent passages. The piece is divided into 20 sections. The five singers comprising the Primavera group collate their talents with marvelous aplomb and, if the term is admissible, dedication. Virginal items by one Joanambrosio Dalza, the composer and his aforementioned contemporaries are interspersed with presumably authoritative license after the custom of the time. The recorded sound is well nigh perfect by current standards. —J.L.

Honoring Queen Elizabeth

(Continued from page 314)

entirely they become rather precious and somewhat fatiguing to the modern listener.

The Randolph Singers, under the direction of their sensitive leader, achieve on this disc the finest performances so far recorded by the group. It is quite evident that considerable care has gone

into the balance of the ensemble and the clarification of the interweaving polyphony. It cannot be said that all the words are clearly audible as the interweaving of the contrapuntal lines are often employing different words in different voices. This, of course, makes the printed text of great value to the listener, for it helps clarify the poetic lines. Westminster has done fine engineering work in which realism is not exploited to the exclusion of intimacy, rightfully belonging to music of this kind. —P.H.R.

In the Popular Vein

The late Fletcher Henderson was playing swing when Benny Goodman was a pup but he never achieved the latter's popularity except by indirection. To wit, he wrote most of Goodman's first famous arrangements. Decca has just issued a memorial album (DL 6025) assembling eight of the best, notably *It's the Talk of the Town* and *Down South Camp Meelin'*, as once played by Henderson's own orchestra. The featured sidemen include such as Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter. Once again, however, Goodman has outdistanced his mentor. A simultaneous Columbia release (GL 524) presents the Goodman band in another group of Henderson arrangements, and all around the latter disc is more representative. The answer is, of course, that Henderson's arrangements made up the core of the original Goodman library, and nobody ever has played them quite so well.

Cook's Tour

Victor has brought out three outstanding LPs in a continuing series entitled *Around the World in Jazz*. There are samplings from England played by the Buddy Featherstonhaugh and Harry Hayes ensembles (LPT 3034), from Sweden played by Arne Domnerus and his orchestra (LPT 3032), and from Italy played by (get this) the Roman New Orleans Jazz Band (LPT 3033). Each

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one of these "popular collector's issues" has its own solid merits, although they may hold only academic interest for those votaries who are inclined to be provincial in their persuasions. It is rewarding to run through these imports just for fun, and encouraging to note that the language of jazz, like its longhair brother, is subject to local coloring in the application of its universality.

Victor 45 additions include three fine issues. The first two (EPA 405 and 406) are successive volumes in the Dinah Shore blues series. With Frank de Vol and his orchestra she offers, among other things, *I Got it Bad* and *Wabash Blues* on the first disc and *Moanin' Low* and *Blues My Naughty Sweetie Taught Me* on the second. Miss Shore delivers the lot of them in her usual style, and may it never change. The third disc (EPA 449) brings Fats Waller back to vibrant life in *This Is So Nice*, *Martinique*, *Solitude* and *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*. 'Nuff said.

Kenton Pro And Con

The redoubtable Stan Kenton is twice represented on Capitol this month. His H-383, dubbed *New Concepts of Artistry in Rhythm*, is a collection of avant-garde pieces by Gerry Mulligan, Bill Holman and Bill Russo, mostly the last-named. All are worth hearing repeatedly for their wonderful inventiveness, even if the approach is a little cerebral. This man Russo has something. The second Kenton item (H-426) is less interesting but perhaps a straw in the wind. The album is called *Sketches on Standards*, and the contents include *Begin the Beguine*, *Pennies from Heaven* and so forth. If Kenton has to do this sort of thing to make a living, all right, but his faithful are cautioned to beware the present disc, which is strictly for the Saturday night teen-agers.

Also for the Saturday-nighters, but this time no denigration intended, is Volume II of *This Is Glenn Miller* (RCA LPT 3036). A whole generation of thirtyish Americans will rush out to buy this recording when they hear that it contains re-issues of such famous old sides as the

Sunrise Serenade, *Tuxedo Junction* and *String of Pearls*. Comment unnecessary.

We are still with the weekend date crowd. Columbia offers a Harry James item called *One Night Stand* (GL 522) which is ostensibly a microgroove immortalization of a date at the Aragon Ball room in Chicago, taped via a wire to Columbia's Wrigley building studios. The program includes *The Flight of the Bumble Bee* (naturally), and such semi-standards as *Don't Stop* and *You Go to My Head*. Presumably there are yet many who like the James style. For my taste he isn't the man he used to be.

Hazel Scott has made a typically excellent LP for Capitol (H-364) which is called *Late Show*. Just the sort of thing for a simulated after-theater cocktail hour: *I'll Be Around*, *That Old Black Magic*, *I Get a Kick Out of You* and the like. Nice easy listening, even though the princess seems to have lost much of her old imaginative spark.

Another Goodman "arrangement" gimmick is GL-523, which brings together twelve numbers by Eddie Sauter. The old ones include *More Than You Know*; the new ones *Moonlight On The Ganges* and *Lone Walked In*. If you have liked Goodman this past decade you have liked Sauter's arrangements. They are all quite nice, but none of them are less than commercial if that is of any consequence as a criticism.

Broadway on LP

The "show album" harvest has been rich this season. One very new musical has been recorded by Decca (*Wonderful Town*, DL 9010) and one very old musical has been recorded by Columbia (*On Your Toes*, ML 4645). These are the standout discs simply because the shows are, or were (to be precise, is and was) the best Broadway fare. It is about time the Lorenz Hart-Richard Rodgers masterpiece of 1936 found its way to microgroove. It was one of the best things New York ever saw and heard, replete with such gems as *There's a Small Hotel*, *Quiet Night*, and a stunning second act ballet sequence known then, and latterly more so, as *Slaughter on 10th Avenue*.

This splendid performance—a new one, by the way, and not a re-pressing—stars Portia Nelson and Jack Cassidy. They and all others concerned turn in handsome jobs. So do the participants in *Wonderful Town*, which conjures up the Manhattan of exactly one year earlier. The new smash hit was based on the highly successful but non-musical *My Sister Eileen*. Betty Comden and Adolph Green wrote the sparking lyrics, and Leonard Bernstein the sometimes dull but mostly arresting music. Rosalind Russell, especially, is grand in the top role. Just grand!

Other shows newly ensconced on LP include two snagged by Victor with original casts: *Two's Company* (LOC-1009) and *Hazel Flagg* (LOC-1010). The former, unhappily now a thing of the past, is pretty much a one-woman proposition, namely Bette Davis. But the Vernon Duke-Ogden Nash lyrics stand up exceptionally well in retrospect, which is more than one can say for the stellar luminary. Miss Davis is much more persuasive in person. For that matter, so is Helen Gallagher, who has the lead in *Hazel Flagg*. But Ben Hecht's book has substance, as did the hilarious *Nothing Sacred* on which it was built. Miss Gallagher also has a voice, which Miss Davis doesn't, and so does Dean Campbell, whose *Salome* is really something.

Lillie And Lillies

More show stuff is at hand, none of it exciting except for a wonderful, wonderful souvenir album by Beatrice Lillie, the incomparable (DL-5453). The crop includes selections from the sound track of *Call Me Madam* (DL-5465) with Ethel Merman, Donald O'Connor and George Sanders; ditto *Salome* with Rita Hayworth (DL-6026), and I can imagine no sound reason for the latter's existence in the first place although the former is less expensive than the earlier original cast album. The above three are from Decca. In a similar vein Victor digests *The Jazz Singer* (LPM-3118) with Danny Thomas; and Capitol, for some reason just as obscure as Decca's with *Salome*, offers the sound track of *By the Light of*

the Silvery Moon on H-422.

Decca has transferred to LP several of its best recent 78 issues. On one disc (DL 7021) we find Libby Holman in *Love for Sale*, Marlene Dietrich in *The Boys in the Backroom*, George Jessel in *Hello, Momma* and Ben Bernie in *Au Revoir—Pleasant Dreams*. Clearly your money's worth.

The French library has been accumulating. Recent items include collections by Yvette Giraud on Victor (LPM 312), Mira Jozelle on Westminster (WL 3006), and George Feyer on Vox (VX 500). The first two are singers, the third a pianist. Each album is, in its way, admirable. The Feyer disc strikes me as the one most apt to be played again and again. This man has a lot of style, befitting his classical antecedents.

Conductor's Holiday

Eugene Ormandy (what's he doing here?) and the Philadelphia Orchestra "Pops" play selections from *Naughty Marietta* and *The Fortune Teller* on Columbia AAL 29. Similarly the Hollywood Bowl Pops, Johnny Green conducting, offers a sampling of Sigmund Romberg favorites on Decca DL 9665. Excellent recording and sumptuous sound in both.

On a Capitol disc (H-366) there is something called a *Lover's Rhapsody Suite*, presumably designed for nocturnal listening under romantic circumstances. The gamut covered here, it says in the jacket notes, ranges from "desire" and "flirtation" through to "temptation" and finally "enchantment." Plainly this production is meant to be heard as background music, but in the hypothetically projected setting, who listens?

Among the 45 singles from Victor there is one (47-5284) which is proof positive of the ecumenical inanity which is the without which not of the juke box ballad. This evidence is entitled *Uska Dara*. Despite some interpolated comments I have not the vaguest notion of its message beyond the intelligence that (1) it is becoming a best seller, (2) it is musically meretricious, and (3) it is sung in pure, unadulterated Turkish. That's all.

—JAS

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